PRAYER MEETINGS.

The subject upon which I propose to drop a few remarks is to some people a term of contempt. They look upon the prayer-meeting as being of no good whatever. But I hope that there is no one in the fraternity represented by the colums of this paper, that opposes such meetings. The grandest thing upon God's footstool is to be a Christian and love the Lord our God with all our souls, our minds, and our neighbors as ourselves. What is more gratifying to the soul than to hold sweet communion with Him who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that we through Him might live and not die? What is more consoling to the troubled breast than to come before God and make our wants and wishes known? What is more efficacious than a "publican's" or "prodigal's" earnest appeals for mercy? And what is more pleasing in the sight of God than be in the midst of an assemblage of two or three or more where they have met in the name of the Lord? Did not Christ promise to be with all such assemblies? Is there any one so thoughtless as to disbelive his promise? If not, then the grounds for prayer-meeting are established.

It appears to some of us that we ought to have a reformation in our services. They are becoming entirely too formal. This matter of religion is becoming too theoretical. There are hundreds of people who would consider it a shame to miss a regular meeting, but it matters not much if they cannot give any of the leading thoughts of the sermon to a sick friend after they have come from the meeting. I tell you there are too many who go to church in order to hear the flowery sermons, and the beautiful Rhetorical expressions that tickle the ear, and the oratorical powers of the minister; and if they find a mistake in grammar, or rhetoric, or in gesturing they consider the meeting a partial and sometimes a total failure. If you were to ask them of the grammatical errors, &c., they could count them all off right along, but then ask them to give you the theme and leading thoughts of the discourse, and they can't tell you. Such persons are a disgrace to the church; they deceive their own souls, their fellow-men, and virtually mock God. This kind of work reminds me of the circumstance, when a certain congregation was in the act of dispersing, a man came up and inquired whether the sermon was done; and some one promptly replied: "No, it was spoken, but it remains to be done." I am afraid this is the case with too many of the sermons at the present day. They are spoken and are never "done." We hear them and then forget them forever. What a piece of Christianity! Is it not a shame that anyone should mock God in this way and at the same time deceive himself? There is too much piecing and patching up done among Christian professors and not enough whole-souled work. What we want and need is *new* hearts and not a patching up of the *old* ones, for as soon as we begin patching, the rent is only made worse. What we want is a practical religion, a religion that reaches and tenders the hearts of men, and not the ears; a religion that follows the farmer to the field, the workman to the workshop, the merchant to the storeroom, and not only to the church; a religion that makes us honest and holy men, and not rascals and fools; a religion that brings men to the very foot of the cross and that teaches them to observe all things. Oh! how many people there are in the world who get to the top of the cross instead of to the foot, they "bragg" instead of praying, they step over the valley of humility and take a seat on the mount of exaltation; but let me impress the thought upon your minds, that "whosoever exaleth himself shall be abased, and that he humbleth himself shall be exhalted."

In view of the forgoing facts, let us do away with some of our stiff formalism, and come together more frequently in the capacity of prayer-meetings. Rather do away with regular meeting once in a while and have a prayer meeting instead. In the prayer-meeting everything is more in common, and just as soon as we get that amount of manfear away from us, that we should not have, we will feel more at home than in the regular service. An active prayer-meeting that meets once a week will make more earnest, praying Christian workers than regular preaching three times a week. It causes the indifferent and careless members to become praying men. Assign the young some work and expect them to do it, and it will induce them to become workers, and just as soon as you get the young to work the old will follow, if they have not gone before as is their duty. There are hundreds of young men and young women and old ones too, who would make active workers if they were pushed into the work. All they need is a start and they will work right along and with interest. And another advantage to be derived from the prayer-meeting is the selection of ministers. It will be an easy matter to find the best talent, and when ministers are needed we know just who to take. The prayer-meeting gives all an opportunity to show themselves approved unto God.

What a grand sight for the angels in heaven to look upon, and see a company of young Christians, and old ones too, singing and praising God with hosannahs of joy; and the influence that such a company wield is inestimable. It may be the means of bringing some poor souls out of darkness into light who might never be reached by any other means. If only one soul would repent through the influence of the prayer-meeting, it would be worth more than all the efforts we can put forth; yea, more than all the riches of this world. Again there are those who are apt to slide back with a perpetual backsliding, and many such persons might be encouraged and be induced to work and go on unto perfection. O, my friends if you are interested in the salvation of souls,—as every professing Christian should be,—and SEEING as you do, the countless thousands of persons who have never offered a prayer half as long as the shortest oath they made, and who are wondering about in the darkest shades of night; whose souls are stained with the stains of the crimes of sin, and who are lingering about the brink of hell, and who are almost fit to enter and share the miseries of eternal damnation; can you not do away with some of your stiff formation and try to lead them into the fold of Christ where all should be peace and happiness? And the greatest good that would result from thse meetings would be in the preservation of the weaker members who love a tendency to be astray. Our prosperity in the church does not only consist in receiving additions, but also in preserving that which we already have.

Oh! when I see old men and old women whose hairs are silver gray with the frosts of age, and who have raised children and grandchildren, and who are as far from Christ as hell is from heaven; my soul is caused to grieve within me. Let us, therefore, invite such into our social meetings, our prayer meetings, and our regular services, and lift them up that true manhood and womanhood which is only attained through close adherence to the gospel of Christ.

ALVIN A. COBER.

Ashland, Ohio.

From Auburn, Ill.

It was announced sometime ago that we would hold a protracted meeting at Auburn, to begin on the 28th ult. The meeting was not continued, partly on account of brother Mallott not putting in his appearance, and partly on account of bad roads.

On the 5th inst. the church met and decided to elect two deacons. The lot fell on three. They were ail duly installed according to Acts 6. The brethren chosen are, Josiah Kimmel, C. M. Poley and Levi Beeghly. They are all worthy young brethren, and we hope the church will profit by their labors.

On the 10th instant I went to Girard, ten miles south of Auburn, and preached in the Presbyterian church, closing on the 15th. The immediate result was six additions to the church; four by baptism and two by relation. Three of the said six were baptized here at Auburn, yesterday. This church now has fifty-three members; but the best of all is they are in love and union.

The meeting held at Girard was the first ever held there by the Brethren; and while only six united with the church, others seemed to count the cost. We were told of sevseral who said: "Well, this is the first meeting of this church I ever attended, but it is the doctrine for me; and if I ever join *any* church, this will be the one I will join.

J. H. SWIHART.

Auburn, Ill., April 21.

From Bridgewater, Ohio.

The Brethren of Silver Creek church are living in hopes of better times. We met in council on the 5th of April, at the new church. Had a good meeting. Met for the purpose of making arrangements for our communion, and if the Lord will, we will hold our communion the last of May or the first of June. We have a new church house and it is open for all Christian people to worship in. We have had a protracted meeting this winter; brother R. F. Mallott was with us. We enjoyed his company very much. Now that the summer is come let every member of the church be enlisted in trying to increase the congregation at prayer service and at the preaching of the word. Do what you can to have your preacher a good congregation. No wonder if his congregations fall off in numbers when the members do not invite their neighbors to come; and when they are often absent themselves. You can make your preacher or kill him. We ask an interest in the prayers of our brethren.

MARY KIZER.

Bridgewater, O., April 19.

THE GERMAN BAPTIST LAWSUIT IN FRANKLIN COUNTY, PENN'A.

The *Vindicator* for May publishes the following from the pen of Judge Kimmel, the attorney for the Old Order brethren:

It will doubtless be pleasant news to your readers to learn that the vexatious legal contention of the church in the courts of Franklin county, Penna., is ended by the Plaintiffs taking a "*Non Suit.*" The Plaintiffs as members of the Falling Springs District filed a "Bill in Equity" to obtain the exclusive possession of the four church houses in the District, from the defendants. They charged the defendants amongst other things, with having revolted against the authority of annual meeting, with having broken the fundamental laws of the church; with being schismatics and thereby severed all ecclesiastical connection with the church, which ultimated in their exclusion, and deprived them of all right to the church property.

The general answer of defendants was that the annual meeting was not invested with either legislative or judicial powers, and that its decisions were "only *advisory.*" That the Brethren have no other creed than the Bible. That the Holy Scriptures constitute the only infallible rule of faith and protection for the Church. That the Scriptures stand above ecclesiastical councils, including the annual meeting,. They denied being chismatics, and averred that they were faithful, zealous and obedient members of the church, always living in that strict accordance with the Divine rule, and the well-known and recognized practices of the *Fathers* of the church. And charged plaintiffs with being the author of the dissentions by introducing innovations upon the plain and simple form of worship not not known to the Fathers. Thus the case stood on the pleading, and an officer was appointed by the court to take the testimony. Two Bishops, Saylor and Long, were examined, a young preacher of less experience and little knowledge, and here it in fact ended; and in this chaotic condition was discontinued. The real points at issue between the parties was never reached. In the meanwhile the houses were used jointly, neither party molesting the other in the use. Various causes were at work to effect the extinguishment of this firebrand in the church. In the first place the "conservatives" were not a unit on the policy of the suit, and the largest part were lukewarm in its support. They could not forget that litigation was discountenanced by the church in all times past; finally the leaders concluded that the experiment had better be abandoned. Secondly the BISMARK *decision* threw *cold* water on the project of lawsuits for church property. If the defendants should be excluded for disregarding the decisions of the annual meeting, the application of the same rule would exclude the plaintiffs with this disadvantage to them; they endorsed the action of the annual meeting whilst the defendants clamored to go up to a higher power, the Law of Christ. Thereby the bitterness of feeling, which marked these troubles in the beginning is rapidly dying out, and will soon be forgotten. The parties were neighbors, had worshiped together from early life, and with a few exceptions, were most excellent people; and it is not strange at all, that at the bottom they should respect each other, and desire to live in peace. Lastly this termination was largely due to the consummate prudence and sound judgment of the old order brethren, during the pendency of the case. They did "not render railing for railing," nor in any way excite angry paissons. The bore themselves meekly, but firmly, and with Christian propriety. They did not add fuel to the flame of war, but held out the OLIVE BRANCH OF PEACE ALL THE TIME.

The experience of this case, it is hoped, will go far to allay the litiguous spirit abroad in the church. The plaintiffs have learned that there are two sides to every controversy, and they have learned also that lawsuits engender the "very bitterness of strife" and all anti-christian feelings, and that heart burnings and passions take the place of love and Christian charity. Law-suits in the churches are the very incarnation of devilishness. The true genius of Christianity is love and peace.

F. M. K.

Altenwalt, Franklin county, Pa.

We cannot right every wrong, but we can indeed wrong every right.

Prosperity makes friends, but whether they be real adversity will decide.

All the doors that lead inward to the secret place of the most High are doors ourward—out of self, out of smallness, out of wrong.

Let a man set his heart upon obedience, simple obedience to the commands of God, and that man will dwell in God, and every command will bring him closer to God, and he will find out more and more what God's commands are.

From Jones Mills, Pa.

DEAR EVANGELIST; I want to tell you that on last Sunday we organized our Sunday School, and will be known as the Brethren's Mission Sunday School at Jone's Mills. The organization is as follows: Superintendent, W. A. Harman; Assistant Superintendent, I. W. Weimer; Secretary, G. Weimer; Assistant Secretary, M. C. Myers; Treasurer, Amos Stahl,; Librarians, James Weimer and Em-Sheets; Chorister, Maimy Bennett.

The above seems to be the choice of the church unanimously, and as far as I know is satisfactory to all. We feel encouraged to begin the work, as the brethren seem awake to their duty concerning the Sunday school work. I have never secn such a deep interest manifested at an organization before. The only regret is that we have no Sunday school literature of our own, and have to depend on other publishers for literature. Is there not some way that this want can be supplied in the the near future? I believe it could be made a success. Your weak but well wishing brother in Christ. W. A. HARMAN.

Our Pledge.

By the help of my Heavenly Father I hereby promise,

1. That I will not drink any intoxicating liquors.
2. That I will not use tobacco in any form.
3. That I will avoid profanity and tell the truth.
4. That I will help others to avoid these evils, and live so that when we come to die it may be well with us all.

Is not this a most excellent pledge? If all of you who read this would take it and live up to it, don't you think it would keep you in the right way? You could never become drunkards and thus bring misery and shame upon yourself and friends. You would never fall into the nasty and unhealthful habits of smoking and chewing tobacco which has cursed the lives of so many.

You would never become profane and untruthful.

And, lastly, you would prove a great blessing to your associates by leading them into the better way that ends in honor and everlasting life. How many of you are prepared to take the pledge?

Our Future Condition.

We are quite certain that what we are can not be the end of God's design. When I see a block of marble half-chiseled, with just, perhaps, a hand peeping out from the rock, no man can make me believe that that is what the artist means it should be. And I know I am not what God would have me to be, because I feel yearnings and longings within myself to be infinitely better, infininitely holier and purer than I am now. And so it is with you; you are not what God means you to be; you have only just begun to be what he wants you to be. He will go on with his chisel of affliction, using wisdom and the graving-tool together, till by and by it shall appear what you shall be; for you shall be like Him, and you shall see Him as He is. O what comfort this is for our faith, that from the fact that our vitality and the fact that God is at work with us, it is clear and true and certain that our latter end shall be increased. I do not think that any man yet has ever got an idea of what man is to be. We are only the chalk crayon, rough drawings of men, yet when we come to be filled up in eternity, we shall be marvelous pictures, and our latter end, indeed, shall be greatly increased.—*Spurgeon.*

A Thirst For Knowledge.

Edward Eggleston, writing in Scribner, of "Some Western School-masters," tells this anecdote:

"While the good Presbyterian minister was teaching in our village, he was waked up one morning by a poor bound boy, who had ridden a farm horse many miles, to get the master to show him how 'to do a sum' that puzzled him. The fellow was trying to educate himself, but was required to be back at home in time to do his day's work as usual. The good master chafing his hands to keep them warm, sat down by the boy and expounded the sum to him so that he uuderstood it. Then the boy straightened himself up, and thrusting his hands into the pockets of his blue jean drawers, pulled out a quarter of a dollar, explaining with a blush, that it was all he could pay, for it was all he had. Of course the master made him put it back, and told him to come whenever he wanted any help. I remember the huskiness of the teacher's voice when he told us about it in school that morning. When I recall how eagerly people sought opportunities of education, I am not surprised to hear that Indiana, of all the states, has one of the largest, if not the largest, school fund,"